

News from the FPPC



California Fair Political Practices Commission
428 J Street, Suite 620, Sacramento, CA 95814
www.fppc.ca.gov

For Immediate Release: December 12, 2011

Contact: Tara Stock at (916) 322-7761

California Allows Campaign Contributions by Text; Maryland Follows Suit

California is the first state to allow campaign contributions by text message. The rules approved by the Commission in October are now in effect. The main goal is to broaden voter participation by offering a mechanism to include citizens in the political process who normally do not participate in campaigns and elections, particularly the younger generation.

It is now up to the wireless carriers and campaigns to implement systems that permit contributions by text message. The concept is similar to texting a donation to a disaster relief fund or a charity. A person can simply send a text message to donate to his or her favorite candidate or cause. The donation amount would be included in the donor's monthly phone bill and when the bill is paid, the campaign would get the contribution.

Commission Chair Ann Ravel hopes the Commission's efforts to engage more people in the political process will create interest in other states and finds it very encouraging that the State of Maryland has followed suit and passed legislation, expected to be in effect early next year, to allow contributions by text message.

"It would be great to have lots of states across the country allow text messaging of political contributions so there will be enough interest and pressure to encourage phone companies to participate," Chair Ravel said. "The idea of encouraging civic engagement is very important to me and I see it as part of our mission."

###